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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Arne W. Ballantine et al.  
Serial No. : 09/896,268  
Filed : June 29, 2001  
Title : FUEL CELL SYSTEMS

Art Unit : 1745  
Examiner : Angela Martin

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Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

REPLY TO ACTION OF JUNE 29, 2006

In reply to the Final Office Action of June 29, 2006, Applicants submit the following remarks.

Claims 1, 7-10, and 12-38 are pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 24-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Roberts et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,329,089, "Roberts"). Applicants hereby incorporate their remarks from the response to the previous Office Action, filed April 12, 2006, and provide the following additional arguments.

Roberts simply does not disclose monitoring voltages of a set of fuel cells and restricting coolant flow when one or more of the monitored voltages decreases from a predetermined voltage range, as required by claims 24-29. Instead, Roberts discloses methods of operating a fuel cell or fuel cell stack in which coolant flow during start-up is regulated based on a measured temperature parameter. For example, Roberts states that:

The starting period is finished when the fuel cell or stack reaches the lower limit of its normal or preferred operating temperature range ....  
Suitable means may be used to detect a cell temperature parameter

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